

Australia

Giant Clam

The Giant Clam, as the name suggests, is the biggest clam in the world. They average about four feet (ask the children if they are taller than the clam)
These bi-valves, creatures with two shells, live to be over 100 years old
There are many stories that these clams eat humans who get too close, but it is probably not true

Kangaroo

Kangaroos are unique to Australia
It is the only large animal that hops on two legs
Early explorers described kangaroos as an animal with a head like a deer, hops like a frog, but stands upright like humans. Many people who have not been to Australia did not believe such an animal existed!

Koala

Many people call Koalas “Koala bears,” but they are not bears at all
Koalas are herbivore, which mean they only eat plants
Baby koalas are called joeys. They are bald, blind and do not have ears. They live in their mama’s pouch for six months until they grow enough to come out.

Saltwater Crocodile

Australians call them ‘salties’ for short
They can get as large as 16 feet! Now that humans are doing a better job protecting their habitats, crocodiles have been getting larger. The largest saltie ever recorded was 28 feet. These crocs usually eat small birds, animals and fish, but have been known to eat larger mammals, like a kangaroo.

China

Golden Monkey

This monkey spends its life in trees, very high up in the tall mountains
The Golden Monkey lives in groups, and the groups can be as large as 600 monkeys.
The monkey defends his territory by screaming and shouting, sometimes by himself, but often in chorus with others.

Panda Bear

Teddy Roosevelt once shot a panda—but it’s against the law today! There are fewer than 3,000 pandas left in the world.
Pandas eat bamboo and very little else.
In Chinese, there are over 20 names for the panda, but the most common is ‘bear cat.’
The pandas have slit pupils much like a cat, and unlike any other bear!

Yak

In Tibetan, these animals are referred to as gyag (meaning male yak) and nak (meaning female yak)—we simplify it by calling the animal, whether male or female, ‘yak.’

The animals live high up in the Himalayan Mountains, and are valued by humans for their warm wool, tasty milk, and their ability to haul heavy loads.
A male yak averages seven feet tall!

India

Bengal Tiger

Fewer than 200 left in the wild
The average Bengal tiger weighs 500 pounds!
It is the national animal of India

Cow

The cow holds a sacred place in Hinduism—in most of India, you cannot eat beef as a result
Cows can roam freely through India—you can see them stopping traffic in massive cities like Delhi!
Cow poop often used as fuel. Light some up and you can cook with it!

Elephant

The Indian elephant, although smaller than its African cousin, is the largest land animal in Asia.
Humans have trained elephants to work as early as 4,000 years ago!
Ganesh, a well-loved Indian god, takes the form of an elephant.

Indonesia

Bird of Paradise

These birds have very fancy and colorful feathers
Many of the males dance for females
These birds eat mostly fruit

Komodo Dragon

The Komodo Dragon is in fact a very large lizard
Komodo Dragons bask in the sun during the day, and dig big holes to sleep in at night
Young Komodo Dragons live in trees

Orangutan

Its name came from the local language and it meant “person of the forest” because of its similarities to humans.
These apes use tools to find food and to eat
Indonesia is the only place where Orangutans are found in the wild.

Sun Bear

The Sun Bear is the smallest bear in the world
It has a distinct yellow spot on its chest
Because it lives in sunny climates, this bear does not hibernate

Iran

Asiatic Cheetah

This big cat is the fastest animal on earth. They can run 75 miles per hour—as fast as a car on the freeway.

Sadly, there are fewer than 100 Asiatic Cheetahs left on earth. They are only found in Iran. Unlike cheetahs in Africa, Asiatic Cheetahs live in the desert.

Iranian Horse

The Iranian horse is prized throughout the world. Most race horses today are in part Iranian.

An ancient legend says that the horse was created from the four great winds: spirit from the North, strength from the South, speed from the East, and intelligence from the West. The Iranians wrote about their horses as early as 500 BCE!

Persian ibex

In local Farsi language, this goat is often referred to as pasang, or rock-footed.

The ibex can climb trees for food—one was spotted twenty feet up!

Gross: some believe that a hard mass in the ibex's stomach is an antidote for poison.